MORE RUSSIAN PICTURE TALES

BY

VALERY CARRICK

Stephen Sayer Myers
From Mother
1924

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VALERY CARRICK

TRANSLATED BY

NEVILL FORBES

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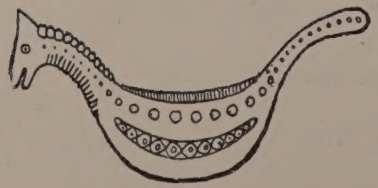
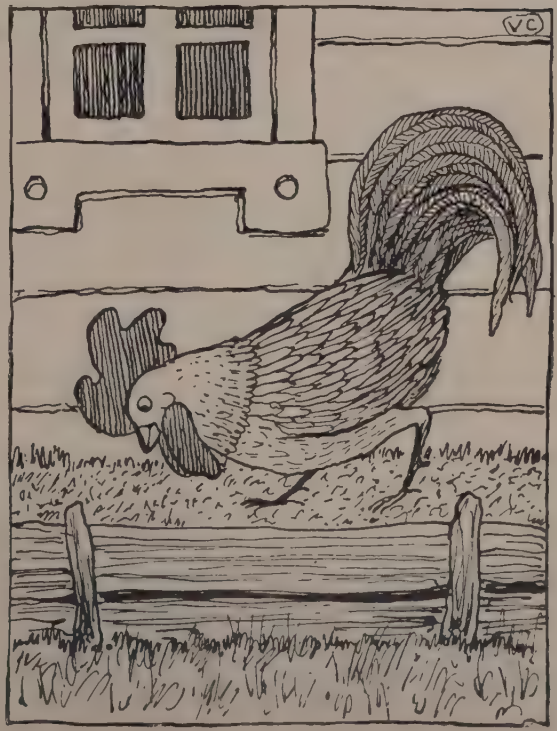


THE COCK AND THE BEAN.

A cock was scratching one day in the earth under the wall of a cottage when he found a bean.

He tried to swallow it, and choked himself. He choked himself and stretched himself out, and there he lay, and couldn't even breathe.



And his mistress saw him, ran up to him, and asked: "Mr. Cock, what makes you lie there like that, so that you can't breathe?"

"I've choked myself with a bean," he answered. "Go and ask the cow for some butter."

And his mistress came to

the cow and said: "Mrs. Cow, give me some butter! My cock is lying there and can't even breathe, he has choked himself with a bean."

And the cow answered: "Go and ask the hay-makers for some hay."

And she came to the hay-makers and said: "Hay-makers, give me some hay! The hay's for the cow who will give me some butter, and the butter's

for my cock who is lying there and can't breathe, he's choked himself with a bean." And the hay-makers answered: "Go and ask the oven to give you some loaves."

And she came to the oven and said: "Oven, oven, give me some loaves! The loaves are for the hay-makers, who will give me some hay, the hay's for the cow, who will give me some butter, and the butter's for my cock who is lying there and can't breathe, he's choked himself with a bean."

And the oven answered: "Go and ask the wood-cutters for some wood."

And she came to the wood cutters and said: "Give me some wood! The wood's for the oven, who will give me some loaves, the loaves are for the hay-cutters, who will give me some hay, the hay's for the cow, who will give me some butter, the butter's for my cock who is lying there and can't breathe, he's choked himself with a bean."

And they answered: "Go and ask the smith for an axe, we've nothing to cut the wood with."

So she came to the smith and said: "Smith, smith, give me an axe! The axe is for the wood-cutters, who will give me some wood, the wood's for the oven, who will give me some loaves, the loaves are for the haymakers, who will give me some hay, the hay's for the cow, who will give me some butter, and the butter's for my cock who is lying there and can't breathe, he's choked himself with a bean." And he answered: "Go into the forest and burn me some charcoal."

So she went into the forest, gathered a bundle of sticks, and burned some charcoal. Then she took the charcoal to the smith, and he gave her an axe. She went with the axe to the woodcutters, and the woodcutters gave her some wood. The wood she took to the oven, and the oven gave her some loaves.

She took the loaves to the hay-makers, and the hay-makers gave her some hay. The hay she took to the cow, who gave her some butter. She

brought the butter to the cock, and the cock gulped it down and swallowed the bean.

Then he jumped up merrily and started singing "Cock-a-doodle-doo! I was sitting under the wall, plaiting shoes, when I lost my awl, but I found a little coin, and I bought a little scarf, and gave it to a pretty girl."

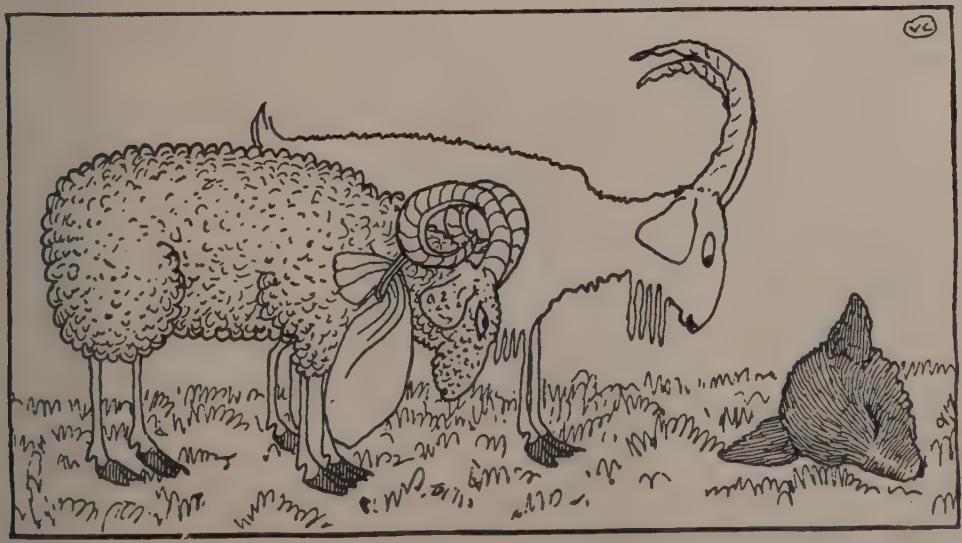
And that's all about it.

THE GOAT AND THE RAM.

ONCE upon a time there lived a man and his wife, and they had a goat and a ram.

And one day the man said to his wife: "Look here, let's get rid of the ram and the goat; why, they only keep eating our corn, and don't help to feed us at all!"

So he told them: "Be off, goat and ram, and don't dare to show yourselves at my gate ever again."

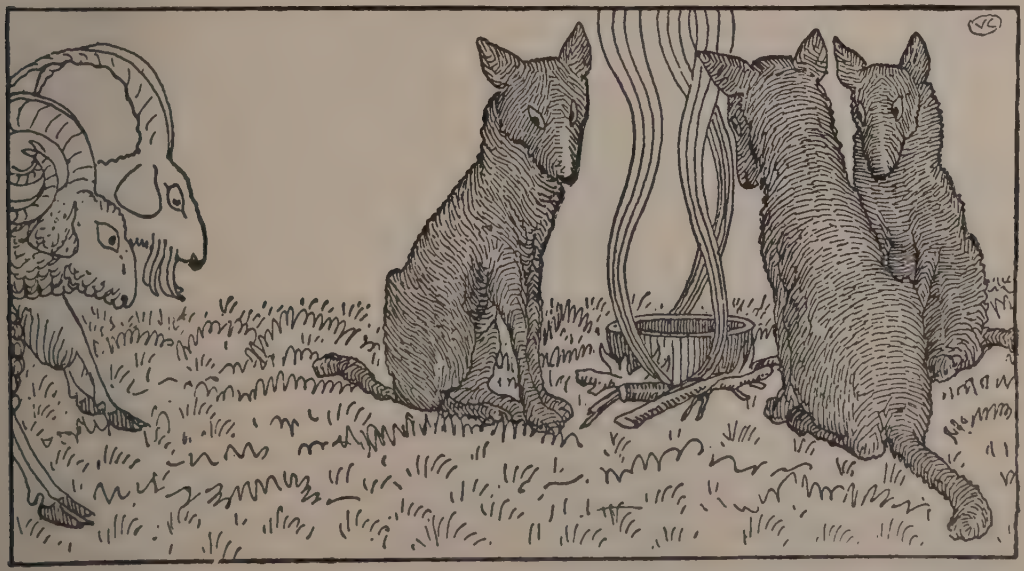


So the goat and the ram made themselves a bag, and went off. And they went on and on, when suddenly they saw a wolf's head lying in the middle of the field."

And they picked up the head, put it in their bag, and went on again. And they went on and on, when suddenly they saw a fire burning, and they

said: "Let's go and spend the night there, lest the wolves should eat us."

But when they got there, lo and behold! it was the wolves themselves who were cooking their porridge, and so they said: "Good evening, young fellows,



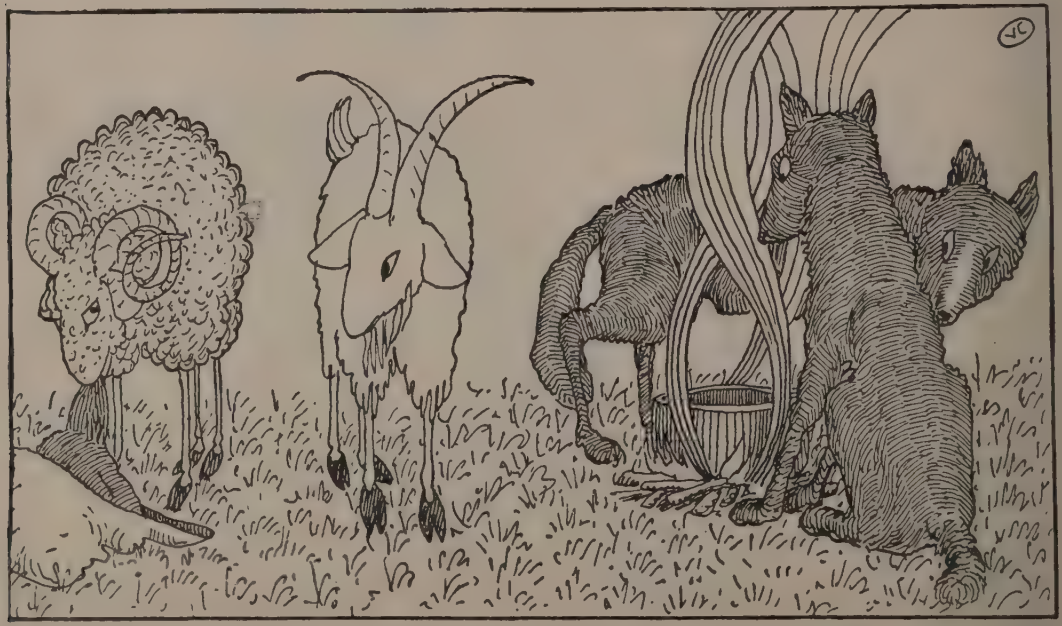
and good appetite to you!" And the wolves answered: "Good evening, Mr. Goat and Mr. Ram! We're just boiling our porridge, come and have some, and then we'll eat you both up." At this the goat took fright, while

as for the ram, his legs had been shaking with fear for some time. Then the goat began to think, and he thought and thought and at last he said: "Come now, Mr. Ram, let's have a look at that wolf's head you've got in your sack!" And the ram took out the wolf's head, when the goat said: "No, not that one. Let's have the other bigger one!" And again the ram gave him the same head, but he said: "No, not that one either! let's have the largest of all!"

And the wolves looked, and thought the ram had a whole sackful of wolves' heads, and each one of them said to himself: "Well, these are nice guests to have! I'd better hop off!" And first one said aloud to the others: "I like your company all right, brothers, but somehow, the porridge doesn't seem to be boiling very well. I'll just run and fetch some sticks to throw on the fire." And as he went off, he thought to himself: "You and your company be bothered!"—and never came back.

Then the second wolf kept thinking how he could get away, and he

said: "It seems very funny, our brother went to fetch the wood, but he hasn't brought the wood, and hasn't come back himself. I'll just go and help him!"



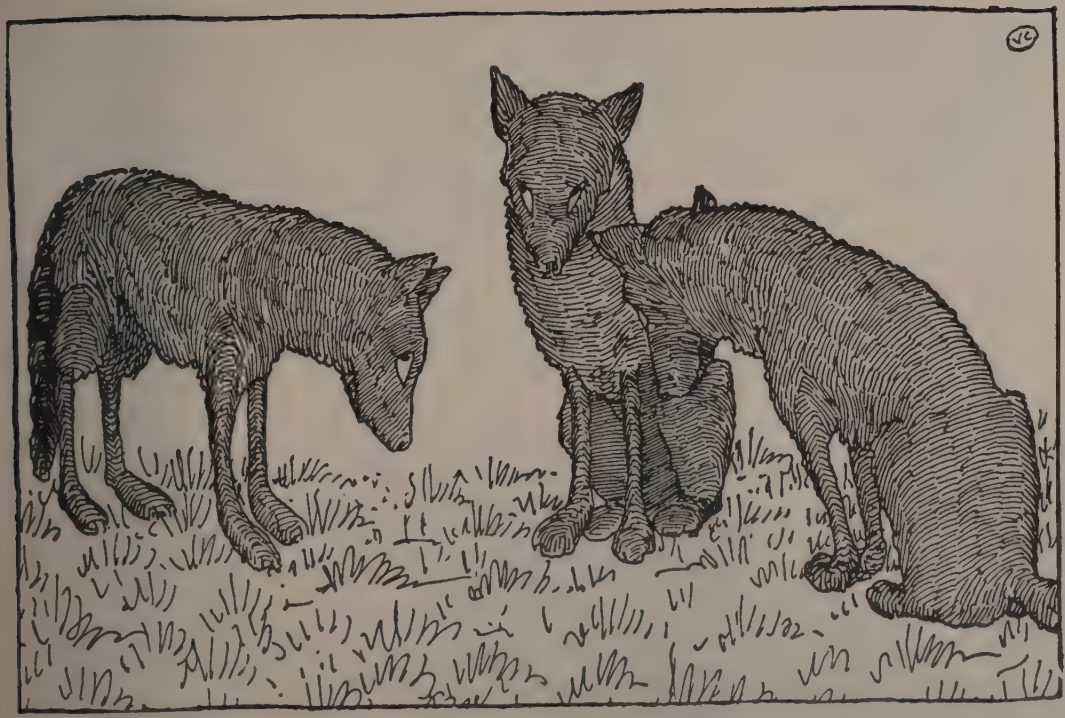
So off he went too, and never came back. And the third wolf was left sitting there, and at last he said: "I must really go and hurry them up. What are

they dawdling all this time for!" And as soon as he was gone, he set off running and never so much as looked back.

And at that the ram and the goat were delighted. They ate up all the porridge and then ran away themselves.

Meanwhile the wolves had all three met, and they said: "Look here, why were we three frightened of the goat and the ram? They're no stronger than we, after all! Let's go and do them in!"

But when they came back to the fire, there was not so much as a trace of them left. Then the wolves set off



in pursuit, and at last they saw them, where they had climbed up a tree, the goat on an upper and the ram on a lower branch. So the eldest wolf lay

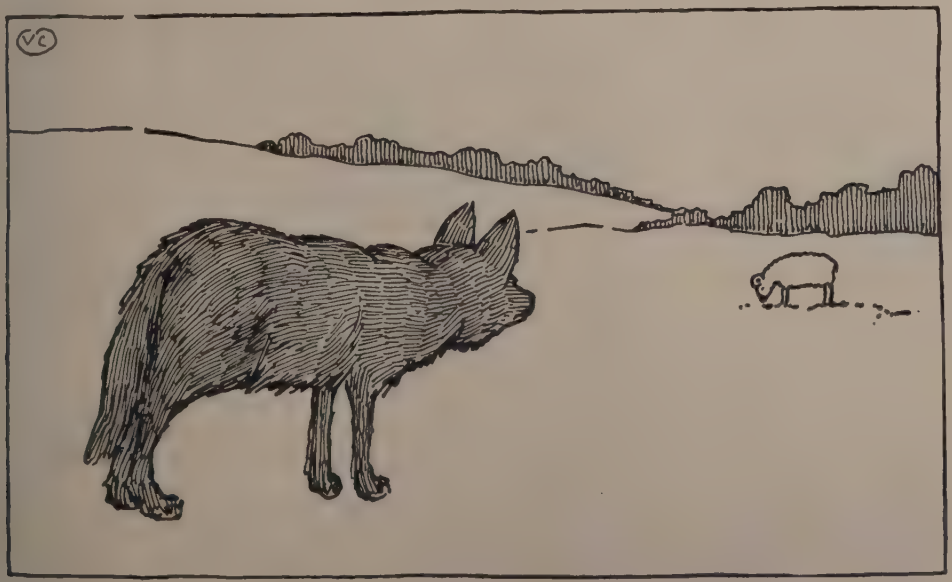
down under the tree, and began to show his teeth, looking up at them, and

waiting for them to climb down. And the ram, who was trembling all over from fright, suddenly fell down right on top of the wolf, and at the same minute the goat shouted out from up above: "There, that's the one! get me the largest of all!" And the wolf was terrified, because he thought the ram had jumped down after him, and you should just have seen him run! And the other two followed after.

What a lucky boy is Pat,
He's got a dog and a cat!

THE HUNGRY WOLF.

THERE was once a wolf, and he got very hungry, and so he went to have a look to see what he could find for dinner. After a bit he saw a ram feeding



in a meadow, so he went up to him and said: "Mr. Ram, Mr. Ram, I'm going to eat you!" But the ram answered: "Who are you, I should like to know,

that you mean to eat me?" "I'm a wolf, and I'm looking for a good dinner," said the wolf. "What sort of a wolf do you fancy you are?" answered the

ram, "you're not, you're a dog!" "No, I'm not a dog," said he, "I'm a wolf." "Well then," answered the ram, "if you're a wolf, stand at the bottom of the hill and open your jaws wide. Then I'll run down the hill and jump straight into your mouth." "All right," said the wolf.

So he stood at the bottom of the hill and opened his mouth wide, while the ram climbed to the top of the hill. Then he ran down the hill very fast, and hit the wolf with his horns as hard as he could.

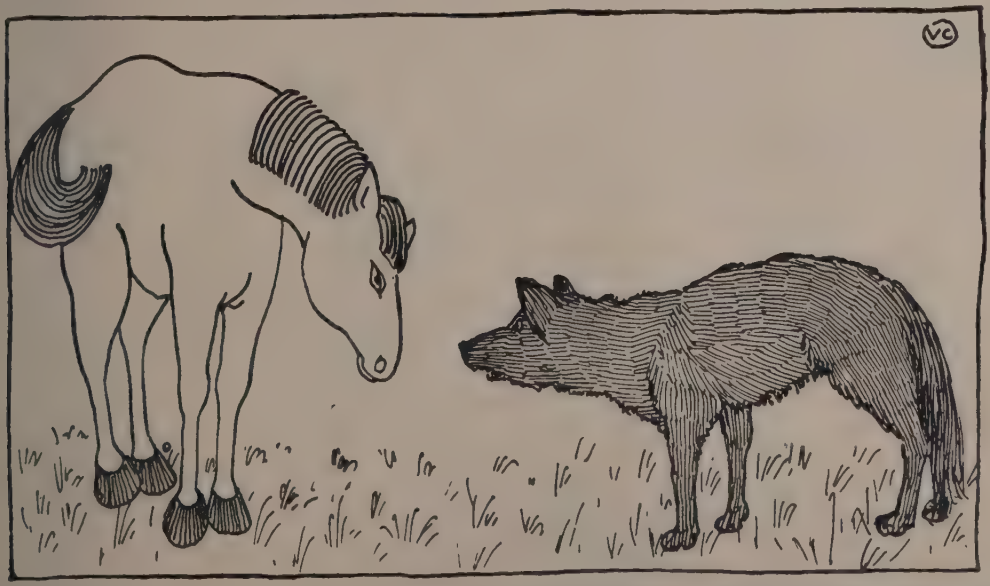
The wolf rolled over, knocked senseless with the blow, while the ram ran off home. And there lay the wolf, till at last he came to himself again, with all his bones aching.

"Well, what a fool I must have been!" thought he. "Who ever saw a ram jump into one's mouth of his own free will?"

Then he went on further, just as hungry as ever, and after a bit he saw a horse walking in a meadow nibbling the grass.

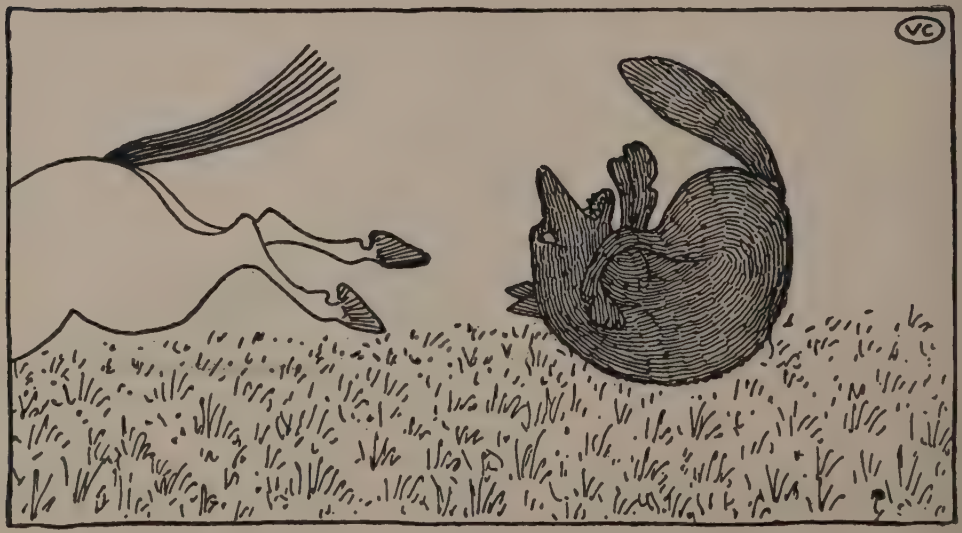
So he went up to him and said: "Mr. Horse, Mr. Horse, I'm going to eat you!" But the horse answered: "Who are you, I should like to know,

that you mean to eat me?" "I'm a wolf!" "You think again," answered the horse, "You're only a dog!" "No, I'm not a dog," said he, "I'm a wolf."



"Oh, if you are sure you're a wolf, it's all right. Only I'm not very fat yet, so you'd better begin on my tail, and meanwhile I'll be munching some more grass and get a little fuller."

So the wolf went up to him from behind, and was just going to get to

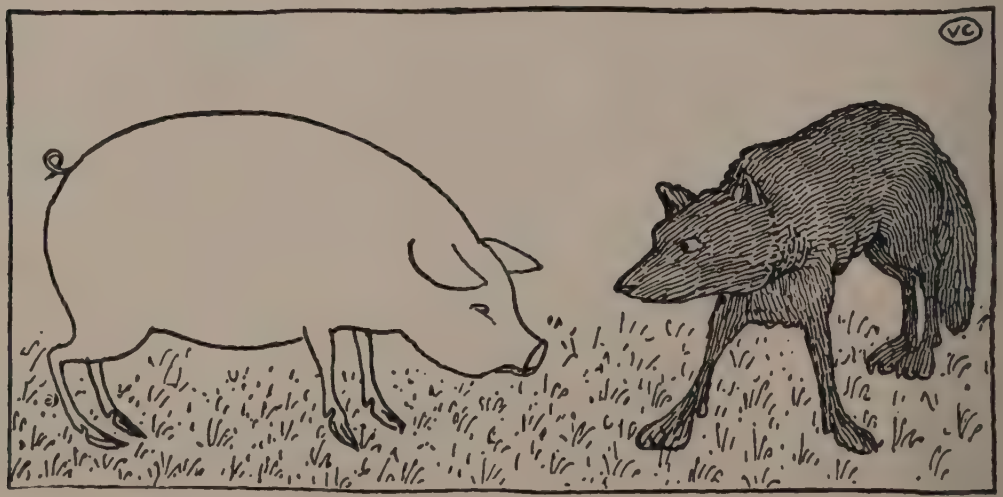


work on his tail, when the horse let out at him as hard as he could! And the wolf rolled over, while the horse ran off.

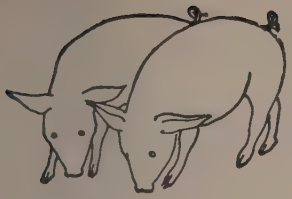
And there sat the wolf, and he thought: "Well, wasn't I a fool! wasn't I a noodle! Who ever heard of anyone starting to eat a horse by the tail?"

And so he wandered on further, when after a bit he saw a pig coming towards him, so when he got to him he said: "Mr. Pig, Mr. Pig, I'm going to eat you!" But the pig answered: "Who are you, I should like to know, that

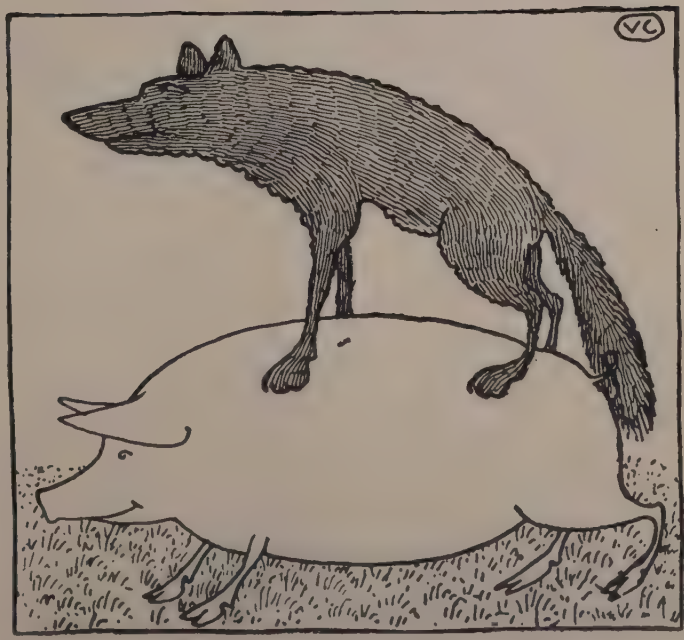
you mean to eat me?" "I'm a wolf." "You're a queer sort of wolf," answered the pig, "you're only a dog!" "No, I'm not a dog," said he, "I'm a



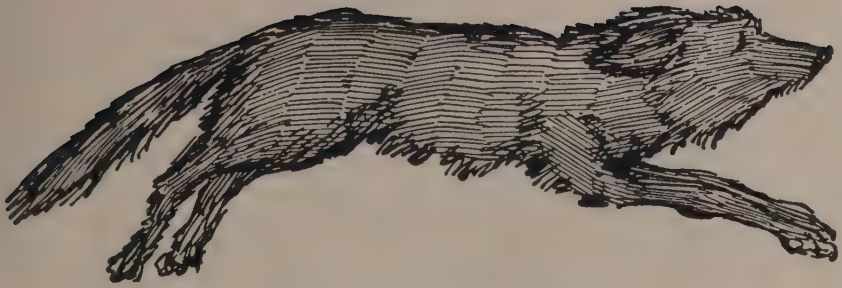
wolf!" "Oh, that's all right then," answered the pig, "you just sit down on my back. I'll give you a ride, and then you can eat me."



So the wolf sat down on the pig's back, when lo and behold! the pig carried him straight into the village.



And all the dogs ran out, made a dash for the wolf, and began to tease him. And they teased him so much, it was all he could do to tear himself



away and run off back into the forest.

Guess how old I am!

THE PEASANT AND THE BEAR.

ONCE upon a time a certain peasant lost his wife, then he lost his other relations, and then he was left alone with no one to help him in his home or his fields. So he went to Bruin and said: "Look here, Bruin,

let's keep house and plant our garden and sow our corn together." And Bruin asked: "But how shall we divide it afterwards?" "How shall we divide it?" said the peasant, "Well, you take all the tops and let me have all the roots." "All right," answered Bruin. So they sowed some turnips, and they grew beautifully. And Bruin worked hard, and gathered in all the turnips, and then they began to divide them. And the peasant said: "The tops are yours, aren't they, Bruin?" "Yes," he answered. So the peasant cut off all the turnip tops and gave them to

Bruin, and then sat down to count the roots. And Bruin saw that the peasant had done him down.

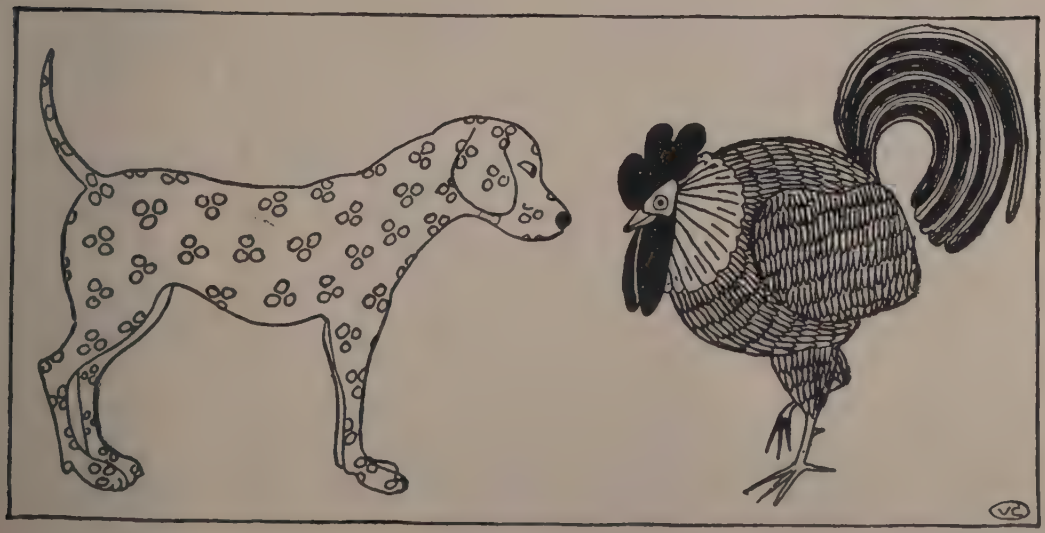
And he got huffy, lay down in his den, and started sucking his paws.

The next spring the peasant again came to see him, and said: "Look here, Bruin, let's work together again, shall we?" And Bruin answered: "Right-ho! only this time mind! you can have the tops, but I'm going to

have the roots!" "Very, well," said the peasant. And they sowed some wheat, and when the ears grew up and ripened, you never saw such a sight. Then they began to divide it, and the peasant took all the tops with the grain, and gave Bruin the straw and the roots. So he didn't get anything that time either.

And Bruin said to the peasant: "Well, good-bye! I'm not going to work with you any more, you're too crafty!" And with that he went off into the forest.

THE DOG AND THE COCK



ONE summer a certain peasant's crops failed him, and so he had no food to give to his animals, which were a cock and a dog. And the dog said to the

cock: "Well, brother Peeter, I think we should get more to eat if we went and lived in the forest than here at our master's, don't you?" "That's a fact," answered the cock, "let's be off, there's no help for it."

So they said good-bye to their master and mistress and went off to see what they could find. And they went on and on, and couldn't find a nice place to stop. Then it began to grow dark, and the cock said: "Let's spend the night on a tree. I'll fly up on to a branch, and you take shelter in the hollow. We'll

get through the night somehow."

So the cock made his way on to a branch, tucked in his toes, and went to sleep, while the dog made himself a bed in the hollow of the tree. And they slept soundly the whole night through, and towards morning, when it began to get light, the cock woke up and, as was his custom, crew as loud as he could: "Cock-a-doodle-doo! cock-a-doodle-do! all wake up! all get up! the sun will soon be rising, and the day will soon begin!"

And he crew so loud, that a fox in a hole near by was up in an instant thinking: "What a funny thing for a cock to be crowing in the forest! I expect he's lost his way and can't get out again!"

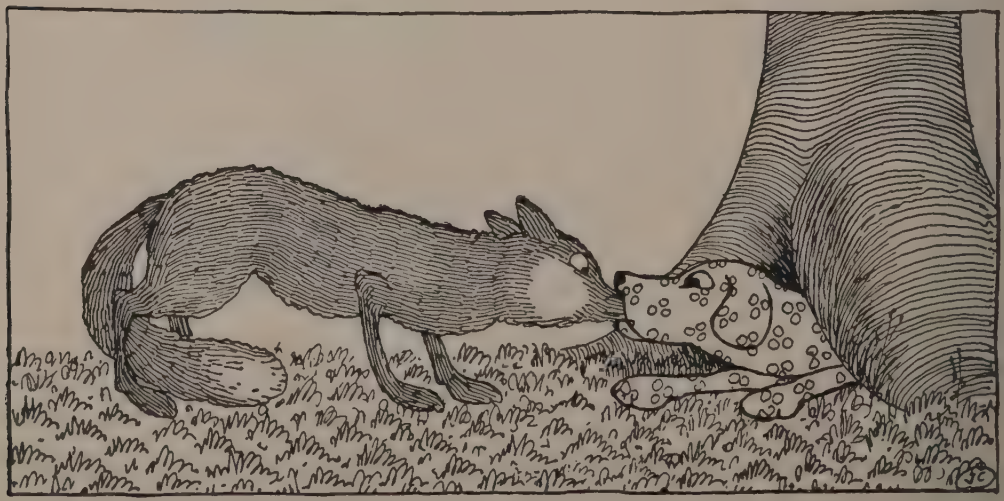
And he began to look for the cock, and after a bit he saw him sitting upon the branch of the tree. "Oho!" thought the fox, "he'd make a fine meal! How can I get him to come down from there?"

So he went up to the tree and said to the cock: "What a splendid cock you are! I've never seen such a fine one all my days! What lovely feathers, just as if they were covered with gold! And your tail! nobody could describe it in words or on paper, it's so beautiful! And what a sweet voice you've got! I

could listen to it all day and all night. Do fly down a little closer and let's get to know each other a little better. That reminds me, I've got a christening on at my place to-day, and I shall have plenty of food and drink to offer such a welcome guest. Let's go along to my home."

"Right you are," answered the cock, "I'll certainly come, only you must ask my companion too. We always go about together." "And where is your companion?" asked the fox. "Down below in the tree hollow,"

answered the cock. And the fox poked his head into the hole, thinking there was another cock there, when the dog popped his head out and caught Mr. Fox by the nose!



KING FROST.

ONCE upon a time there lived an old man and his wife. She had one daughter of her own, and he had one of *his* own. And the old woman took a dislike to her step-daughter. Whatever her own daughter did, she praised her for everything and stroked her head, but whatever her step-daughter did, she grumbled at her and scolded her for everything; it was simply dreadful. And the old woman began to want to drive her step-daughter off the face of the earth, and she said to her

husband: "Take her away into the dark forest, and let the frost freeze her

to death." So there was nothing for the old man to do but harness his horse to the sledge, put his daughter in it, and drive her off into the forest.

And he brought her right into the middle of the forest, set her down on the snow, and drove off home.

And there the little girl sat in the forest all alone, shivering with the cold. When lo and behold! there was old King Frost coming towards her, and he said: "Hullo, little girl, are you warm?" And she answered: "Yes, King Frost." Then he blew a cold breath on to her and again asked: "Are you warm, little girl?" And she

answered: "Yes, King Frost!" Then he began to make it still colder; he made the branches crack, and covered them with hoar-frost, and let loose such cold, that you could hear the air creaking.

Then he asked her again: "Well, little girl, are you warm now?" And she answered: "Yes, King Frost!" And when he saw that she was a good girl, he felt sorry for her. So he put

on her a fur coat, with trimmings of beaver, and made her warm, and said to her: "You're a good girl, and so I'll stop. Here's a little present for you from King Frost."

And he brought her a trunk full of all sorts of things, silver and gold, and bright-coloured stones.

Meanwhile her step-mother was saying to the old man at home: "I expect your daughter's frozen by now. Go into the forest and bring her back." So he harnessed his horse to the sledge, and set out to fetch his daughter.

Then his wife began to watch at the window, and at last she saw her husband driving towards home, and she said to herself: "That's all right, there come the old man's daughter's bones back in the sledge.

But the doggie outside said: "Bow, wow, bow-wow-wow! The old man's bringing his daughter home. She's blooming like the poppy-bloom, and she's got a fine present, and a new coat with a beaver collar!" And lo and behold! it was true; the old man drove up with his daughter alive and well, in her fine clothes and with her presents. "Well," thought her step-mother, "if King Frost has given all those things to the old man's daughter, he'll give my pretty girl ever so much more." And she said to her husband: "Take my daughter to the same place as quick as you can, and let King Frost give her a share too!"

So the old man took her daughter, left her in the forest, and then drove

off home. And there the girl sat, with her teeth chattering with the cold,

when lo and behold! there was King Frost coming along, and he said: "Hullo, little girl, are you warm?" And she answered: "What's that got to do with you? Go away to where you came from!" And King Frost grew angry and blew a cold breath on to the girl, and then asked her: "Are you warm, little girl?" And she answered: "Fancy asking! You can see I'm frozen! Be quick and give me the presents, and

then get away to your home." Then King Frost began to make the girl still colder. And he kept making it colder and colder till he had frozen her through and through.

Meanwhile her mother was saying to the old man at home: "Go into the forest now, and bring back my daughter. And mind, don't forget to take the trunk and the fine clothes as well." So the old man started off, and his wife began to watch at the window.

She waited and waited, and at

last she saw her husband driving towards home, and said to herself: "That's all right, there comes the old man bringing back my daughter all in silver and in gold."

But the doggie outside said: "Bow, wow, bow-wow-wow, the old man's bringing back bones in his sledge!" The old man drove up, and it was too true, instead of the bad old woman's daughter there was only an icicle!

THE BEAR'S PAW.

ONE day a peasant saw a bear asleep in the forest, so he crept up to him and cut off one of his hind paws with an axe. And he brought the paw home, and said to his wife: "Boil some soup from the flesh, and knit some warm gloves out of the wool." So she took off the skin, threw the flesh into the pot to boil, and sat down to spin the wool.

And when Bruin woke up, he found his paw gone. There

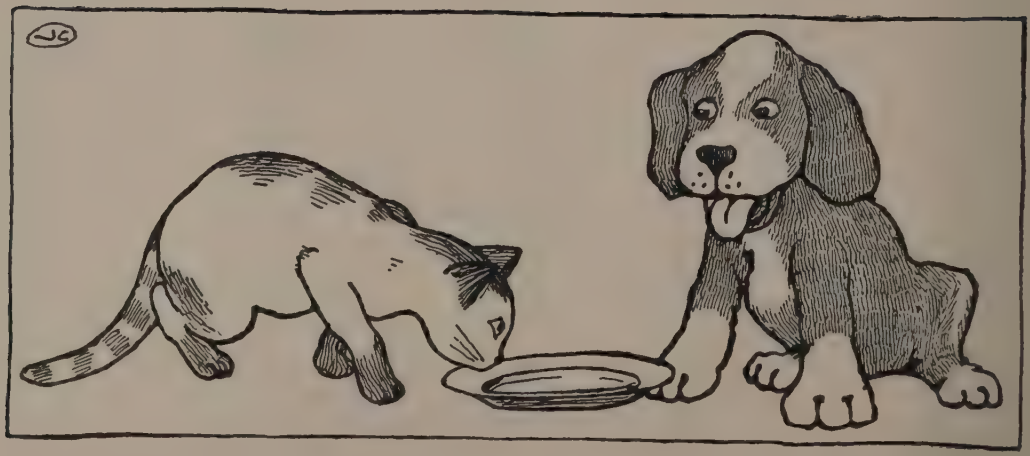
was no help for it, so he cut a bit of wood off a tree, hewed it, tied it on instead of his leg, and set out for the village. As he went along he sang:

"Hobble, hobble, hobble,
On my lime-tree leg,

On my birchen crutch!
The water's asleep,
And the earth's asleep,
The whole village is asleep,
Only one woman's awake,
And she's boiling my flesh,
Sitting on my skin,
And spinning my wool!"

And the peasant's wife got very frightened, and hid as quick as she could in the cellar under

the floor. And Bruin went into the house, and saw there was no one there. So he took his bit of skin, got his flesh out of the pot and made off.



May I?

THE BEAR AND THE OLD MAN'S DAUGHTERS.

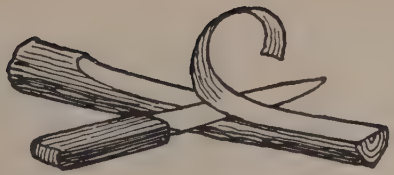
THERE was once an old man and he had three little daughters, and one day he said to them: "I am going out into the fields to plough, and you,

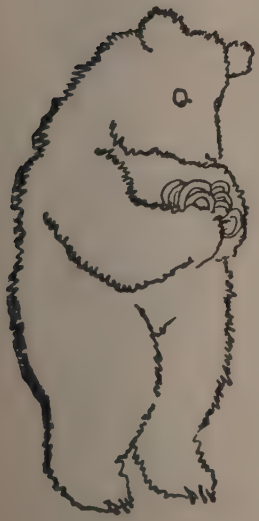
my little daughters, bake me a loaf and bring it to me." "But how are we to find you, daddy?" they said.

"As I go along," he said, "I shall drop shavings in a row along the path, and

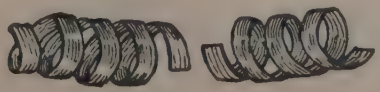
that will help you to find me." And as the old man rode along he threw

down the shavings one after the other, and a bear came and drew them all aside on to the path that led to his den.





Then the eldest daughter said to the youngest: "Go and take the bread to daddy." And the youngest said: "But how am I to find daddy, and where am I to take the bread to?" Then the eldest answered: "He kept dropping shavings in a row along the path as he went." Then she took the loaf, and started off to follow the shavings, when lo and behold! she came to the bear's den.



And the bear saw her and said: "O-ho! What a nice little girl has come to see me!"

The next day the old man went off to sow, and he said to his daughters:

"My dear little daughters, my clever little ones, bake me a loaf and bring it to me in the field." "But how are we to find you, daddy?" they said. And he answered: "Yesterday I threw one row of shavings down, to-day I will throw two." And he set off, throwing the shavings down in two

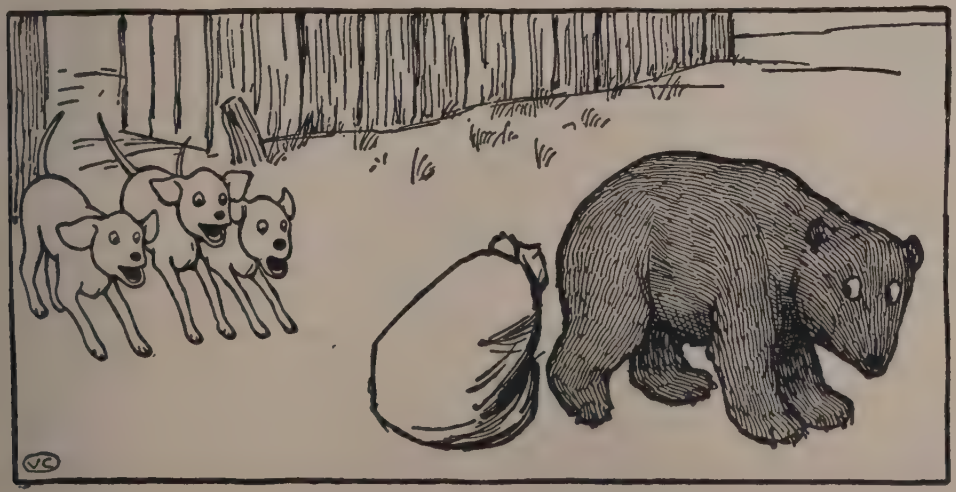
rows, and the bear came and drew them all aside on to the path that led to his den. Then the second daughter started out with the loaf, following the

shavings, and went straight to the bear's den. And the bear saw her and said: "O-ho! here's another little girl come to see me!"

The next day the old man went off to the field to harrow, and he said to his daughter: "My dear little daughter, bake me a loaf and bring it to me in the field. I will throw three rows of shavings." And the old man went off, throwing the shavings down in three rows, and the bear came and drew them all aside on to the path that led to his den. And the eldest daughter set out, and she, too, came to the bear's den. And the bear saw her and said: "O-ho! here's a third little girl come to see me in my den!" And there they went on living, when one day the eldest sister said: "Bruin, Bruin, I'll bake some pies, and you take them and give them to my daddy to eat." "All right," answered the bear, "I'll take them." And so she popped her youngest sister into a sack, and said:

"Here, Bruin, take this to my daddy, and mind, don't you eat it yourself on the way!" And the bear took the sack and set off with it to the old man. And as he went along, he kept saying to himself: "Suppose I sit down on a stump, and suppose I just eat one little pie!" And the youngest daughter in the sack heard him and said: "Don't sit down on a stump, don't! Don't eat a pie, don't!" And the bear thought that this was the eldest sister, and said to himself: "There now, fancy that! I've come a long way, and

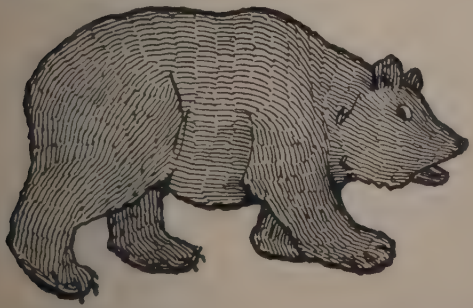
yet she can still hear me!" And he brought the sack right up to the old man's courtyard, when the dogs all rushed out and began to bark at him! So he flung down the sack and ran off home. And the eldest sister asked



him: "Did they make you welcome, Bruin, and give you nice things to eat?" "They didn't give me anything to eat," he answered, "but their welcome was loud enough."

The next day the eldest sister said: "Bruin, take my daddy some more pies to eat!" And she tied up her other sister in the sack, and the bear put it on his back and carried it off into the village. And as he went through the forest he kept saying to himself: "Suppose I sit down on a stump, and suppose I just eat one little pie!" And the second daughter said to him from out of the sack: "Don't sit down on a stump, don't! Don't eat a pie, don't!" And the bear thought: "There now, fancy

that! I've come a long way, and yet she can still hear me, and tells me not to eat a pie!" And so he reached the old man's courtyard, and when the dogs went for him that time, they all but worried him to death! So he flung down the sack and ran off home. And the eldest sister asked him: "Did they welcome you warmly, Bruin, and give you plenty to eat?" "It was *such* a warm welcome, and they gave me *so* much to eat, that I shan't forget it in a hurry!" he answered.

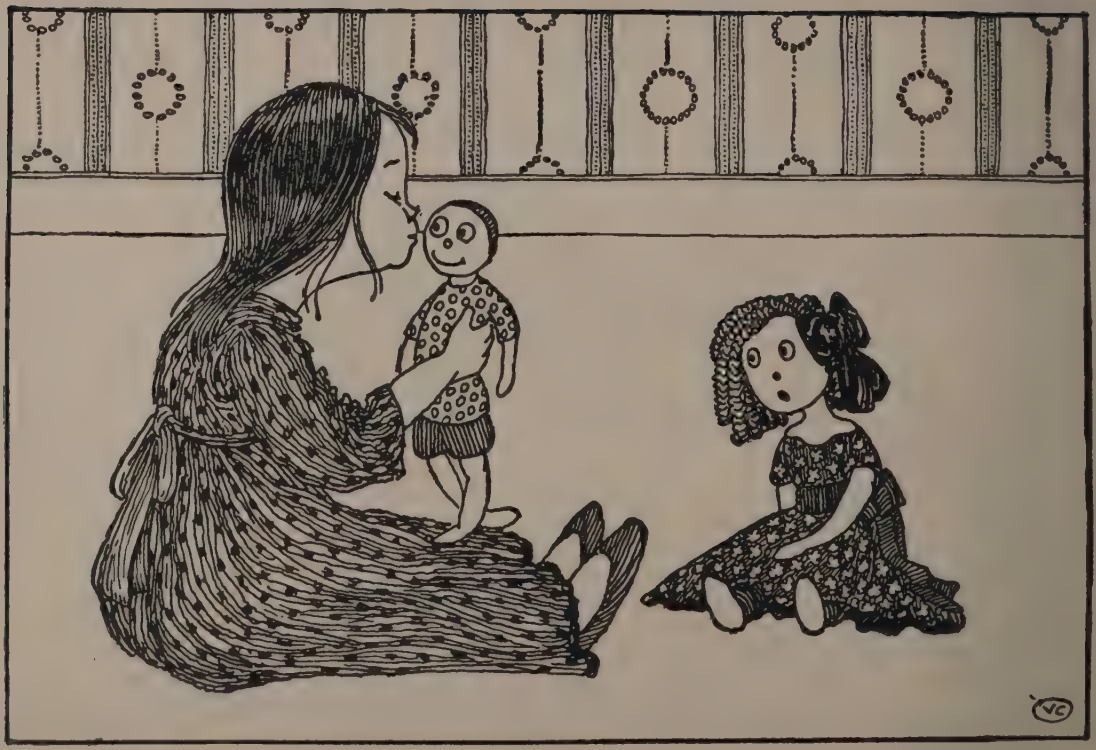


And the next day the eldest girl said: "I'll bake some more pies, and you take them to my daddy for him to eat." And so she herself sat down in

the sack, and the bear carried her off. And as he carried her along he kept saying to himself: "Oh, I *should* so like to sit down on a stump, and I *should* so like to eat one little pie!" And the eldest daughter said to him from out of the sack: "Don't sit down on a stump, don't! Don't eat a pie, don't!" And the bear thought: "There now, fancy that! Look at the long way I've come, and yet she can still see and hear me!" And so he brought the sack to the old man, and then the dogs came upon him and

all but tore him in bits. And he ran off into the forest without as much as

looking round, and the old man began once more to live with his three little daughters.



I don't like what is nice, but what I like *is* nice!

THE STRAW OX.

ONCE upon a time there lived an old man and his wife, and one day she said to him: "Make me a straw ox and smear him over with pitch." And he

asked: "What for?" And she answered: "Do what I tell you! Never mind what it's for—that's my business!" So the old man made a straw

ox and smeared him over with pitch. Then his wife got ready in the early morning and drove the ox to pasture. She sat down under a tree, and began spinning flax and saying to herself: "Feed, feed, ox, on the fresh green grass.

Feed, feed, ox, on the fresh green grass!" And she went on spinning and spinning, and fell asleep. Suddenly from out of the thick wood, from out of the dark forest, a bear came running, and ran right up against the ox.

"Who in the world are you?" he asked. And the ox answered: "I'm the three-year-old ox, all made of straw and smeared over with pitch." Then

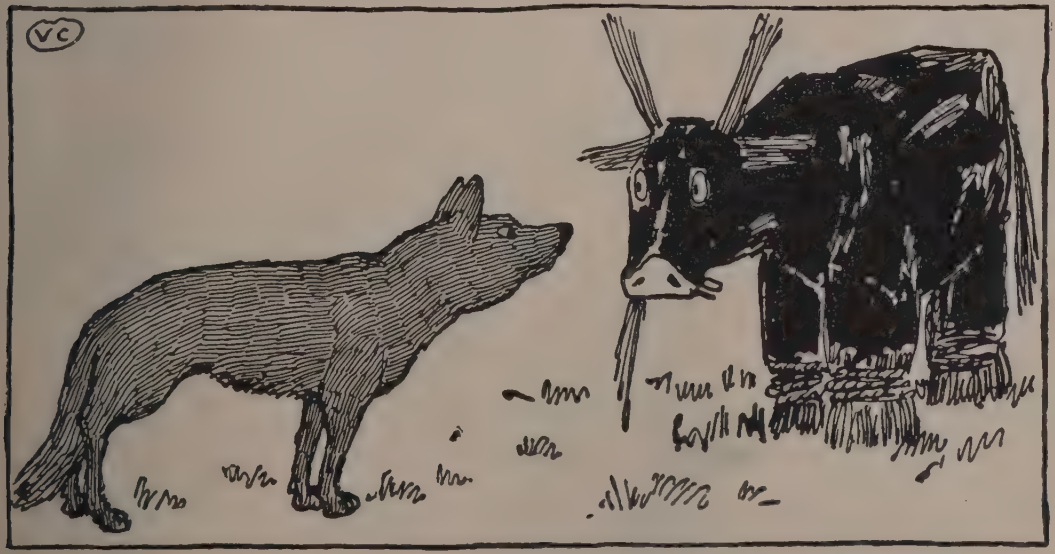
the bear said: "Well, if you're smeared over with pitch, give me some to put on my poor torn side." And the ox answered: "Take some!" So the bear seized hold of the ox, when lo and behold! his paw stuck in the pitch.

And when he tried to free it with the other paw, that one stuck too. Then he started gnawing with his teeth, and they stuck too. He couldn't tear himself away anyhow. And the old woman woke up and saw the bear stuck fast to the ox. So she ran home and shouted to her husband: "Come along quick, a bear has stuck fast to our ox,

hurry up and catch him!" And he came along, took the bear, led him home, and shut him up in the lumber room.

The next day, as soon as the sun rose, the old woman again drove the ox to pasture, and she herself sat down under a tree, and began spinning flax and saying to herself: "Feed, feed, ox, on the fresh green grass of the field!

Feed, feed, ox, on the fresh green grass of the field!" And she went on spinning and spinning, and fell asleep. Suddenly from out of the thick wood,



from out of the dark forest, a wolf came running, and ran right up against the ox. "Who in the world are you?" he asked. And the ox answered: "I'm the three-year-old ox, all made of straw and smeared over with pitch." Then

the wolf said: "Well, if that's so, give me some pitch to put on my poor torn side." And the ox answered: "By all means!" So the wolf tried to take some pitch, when lo and behold! his paw stuck in it. And when he tried to free it, it stuck all the faster. And the old woman woke up and saw the wolf sticking to the ox. So she ran to fetch her husband and said: "Come as quick as yŏu can, there's a wolf stuck to the ox!" And he came and caught the wolf and put him in the cellar.

The next day, before even the sun had risen, the old woman again drove the ox to pasture, and she herself sat down under a tree, and began spinning flax and saying to herself: "Feed, feed, ox, on the fresh green grass! Feed,

feed, ox, on the fresh green grass!" And she went on spinning and spinning, and fell asleep.

Suddenly from out of the thick wood, from out of the dark forest, a fox came running, and ran right up against the ox. "What sort of a beast

are you?" he asked. And the ox answered: "I'm the three-year-old ox, all made of straw and smeared over with pitch." Then the fox said: "Well then, give me some pitch to rub on my side." And the fox was just going to take some pitch, when he stuck fast and couldn't free himself. And the

old woman woke up and saw the fox sticking to the ox. So she ran to fetch her husband, and he came and took the fox and put him in the cellar as well.

The next day the old woman again sat down under the tree to spin her flax while the ox fed, and she began spinning and saying to herself: "Feed, feed, ox, on the fresh green grass! Feed, feed, ox, on the fresh green grass!" And

she went on spinning and spinning and fell asleep. Suddenly from out of the thick wood, from out of the dark forest, a grey hare came running and ran right up against the ox. "What sort of beast are you?" he asked. "I'm the three-year-old ox, all made of straw and smeared over with pitch." Then the hare said: "Well then, give me some pitch to rub on my side." "Take some!" answered the ox. And the hare caught hold of him with his teeth, when lo and behold! his teeth stuck fast. He tore and tore, but couldn't tear them free. And the old woman woke up, and ran to fetch her husband, and said: "Come as quick as you can, there's a hare stuck to the ox!" And the old man came, took the hare and flung

him into the cellar. Then the old man began to grind his knife, and the bear heard him and asked: "What are you grinding your knife for?" And he answered: "I'm grinding my knife to take the skin off your back and make myself a fur coat out of it." But the bear said: "Oh! don't take the skin off my back! Better let me go free, and I'll repay you handsomely." "Well, mind you do!" answered the old man, and so he let the bear go free, and he ran off into the forest.

The next day the old man again began to grind his knife

outside the cellar, and the wolf asked him: "What are you grinding your knife for?" And he answered: "I'm grinding my knife to take the skin off

your back and make myself a fur coat out of it." But the wolf said: "Oh!

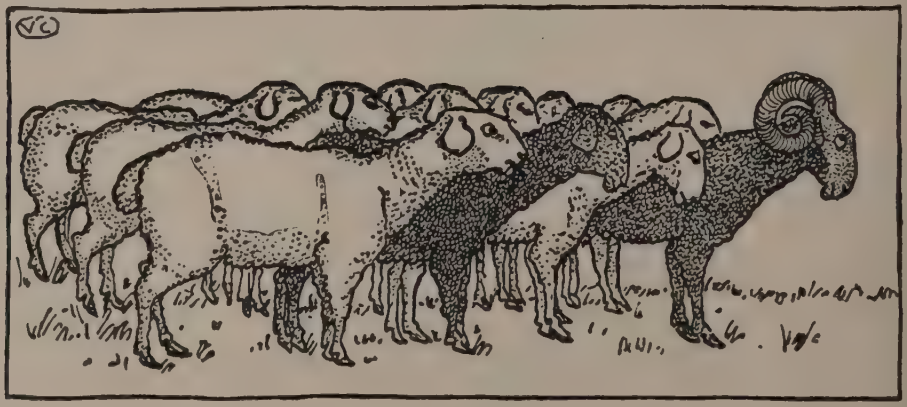
don't take the skin off my back! Better let me go free, and I'll repay you handsomely." "Well, mind you do!" answered the old man, and so he let the wolf too go free. And again he began to grind his knife outside the cellar, and the fox asked him: "What are you grinding your knife for?" And he answered: "I'm grinding my knife to take the skin off your back, and make myself out of it a collar for my fur coat." But the fox said: "Oh! don't take the skin off my back! Better let me go free, and I'll repay you handsomely." "Well, mind you do!" answered he.

Then the hare was left all alone.

And again the old man began to grind his knife, and the hare asked him: "What are you grinding your knife for?" And he answered: "I'm grinding my knife to take the skin off your back, and make myself some fur gloves out of it." But the hare said: "Oh! don't take the skin off my back! Better let me go free, and I'll repay you handsomely." "Well, mind you do!" he answered, and let the hare too go free.

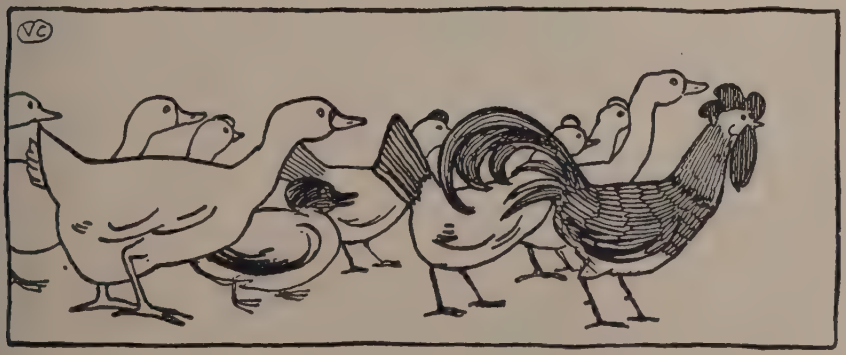
Early the next morning the old man heard someone knocking at the gate, so he asked: "Who's there?" And the answer came: "It's I, the bear, come to pay you my debt." And the old man opened the gate, and there was the bear with a hive of honey he had brought. So the old man took the honey, when again he heard knock-knock

at the gate! "Who's there?" he asked, and the answer came: "It's I, the wolf, come to pay you my debt." And there was the wolf with a whole



flock of sheep he had driven up. So the old man let the sheep into the yard, when again he heard knock-knock at the gate. "Who's there?" he asked, and the answer came: "It's I, the fox, come to pay you my debt."

And there was the fox with a whole farm-yardful of cocks and hens, and ducks and geese. Suddenly there came another knock-knock at the gate.

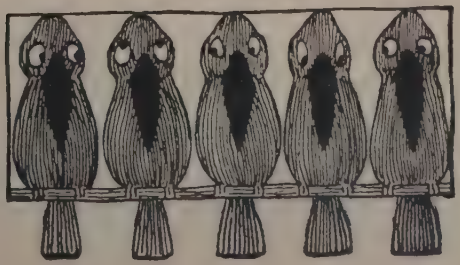


"Who's there?" asked the old man, and the answer came: "It's I, the hare, come to pay you my debt." And he had brought with him a whole

heap of cabbages. And the old man and his wife began to live happily together, and always spoke well and kindly of those beasts.

THE FOX AND THE BLACKBIRD.

A FOX was walking through the forest when he fell into a deep hole. And there he sat and sat, till all at once he began to feel hungry. He started



looking round, but could see nothing. Then he looked up, and there he saw a blackbird in the tree above weaving its nest, and he said: "Mr. Blackbird, Mr. Blackbord, what are you doing?" And the blackbird answered: "I'm weaving my nest." "What are you weaving your nest for?"

asked the fox. "To bring up my children in," answered the blackbird. "But I'm going to eat your children," said the fox. "Don't eat my children," answered the blackbird. "Well then, feed me, I'm hungry," said the fox. At that the blackbird began to fret and to worry: how should he feed the fox?

Then he flew off into the village, and brought back a chicken for the fox.

And the fox ate the chicken, and after a little he said: "Mr. Blackbird, Mr. Blackbird, you fed me, didn't you?" And the blackbird answered: "Yes." "Well then," said the fox, "give me a drink!" At that the black-

bird began to fret and to worry: how was he to get the fox a drink? Then he flew off into the village, and brought back a little pailful of water for the fox.

And the fox had a good drink, and after a little he said: "Mr. Blackbird, Mr. Black? bird, you fed me, didn't you?" And the blackbird answered:

"Yes." "And you got me a drink?" "Yes." "Well then," said the fox, "come and pull me out of the hole!" At that the blackbird began to fret and to worry: how could he pull the fox out of the hole? Then he began to gather sticks in the forest and started throwing them into the hole. And he

kept throwing them in and throwing them in, till he filled the hole. And the fox climbed up on to the sticks and out of the hole. And when he had climbed out, he lay down right under the tree. And there he

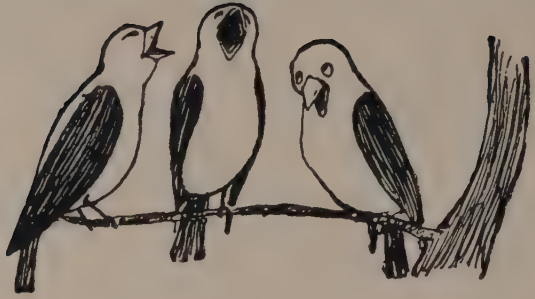
lay and lay, and he said to the blackbird: "Look here, you fed me, didn't

you, Mr. Blackbird?" And the blackbird answered. "Yes." "And you got

me a drink?" "Yes." "And you pullled me out of the hole?" "Yes." "Well then," said the fox, "now make me laugh!" At that the blackbird began to fret and to worry: how should he make the fox laugh? At last he said: "Very well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll fly into the village, and you run after me." So they agreed to do that, and the blackbird flew off into the village and perched on the gate of a rich

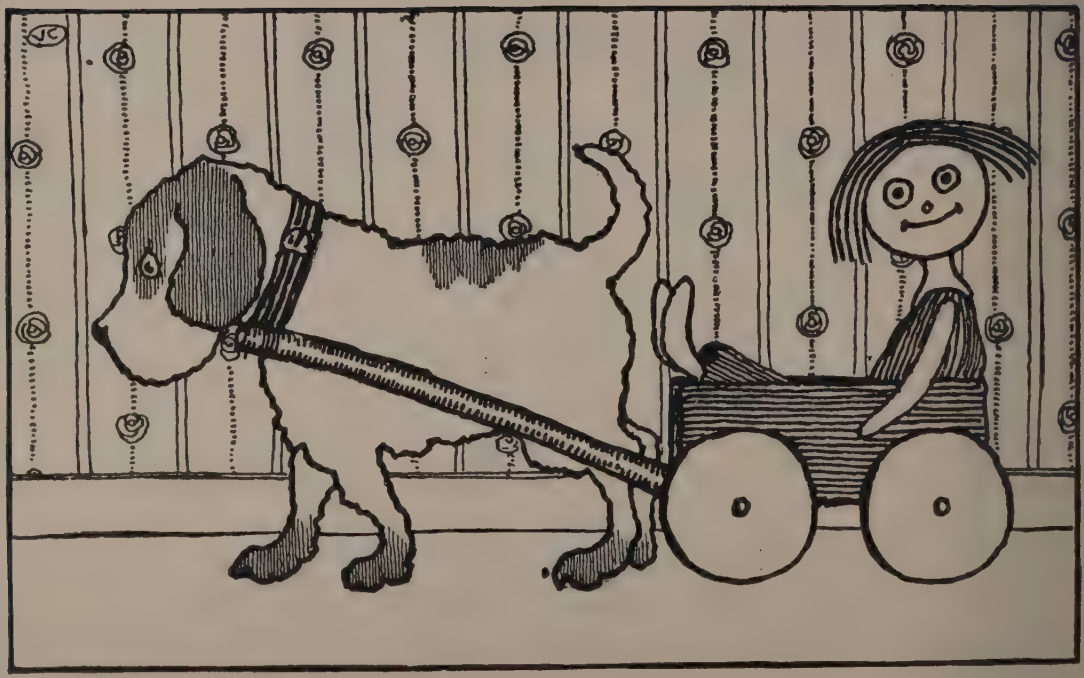
peasant's house, while the fox lay down under the gateway. Then the blackbird began to sing: "Mistress, Mistress, bring a lump of fat! Mistress, Mistress, bring a lump of fat!" And the fox said: "That's fine, let's have it again!" So the blackbird began once more: "Mistress, Mistress, bring a lump of fat! Mistress, Mistress, bring a-lump of fat!"

Suddenly from under the gate a dog said angrily: "Wow-wow!" and



the fox took to his heels and hopped it into the forest as quick as he could!

And that's all about it.



Work is just as good as leisure, when we want to give pleasure.